**Discussion Questions for “A Rose for Emily”**

**Part 1**

1. In the first paragraph of the story, we see that Faulkner uses a first person plural narrator. Why do you think Faulkner prefers this? How does this affect your understanding of the story?
2. Why is Miss Emily Grierson described as “a fallen monument”?
3. What could Miss Emily’s house represent? Comment on the narrator’s description of the house in the first and the fifth paragraphs.
4. Where does the story take place? Collect some information about the setting.
5. Comment on the following excerpt. “Alive, Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town…”
6. What does the father’s portrait, as mentioned in the fifth paragraph, represent? Does the narrator mention about the portrait anywhere else in the story? If yes, in what ways could this be significant?
7. What could Miss Emily’s ticking watch symbolize? What does it tell us about Miss Emily? How does the watch contribute to our understanding of the themes of the story?

**Part 2**

1. Comment on the narrator’s sequence of events by referring to the events both in Part 1 and Part 2. How does this affect your understanding of the story?
2. Find the paragraphs in which the narrator mainly mentions about Miss Emily’s father and Miss Emily’s reaction towards her father’s death. Then examine the relationship between the daughter and the father.

**Part 3**

1. Part 3 opens with the following paragraph: “She was sick for a long time. When we saw her again, her hair was cut short, making her look like a girl, with a vague resemblance to those angels in colored church windows–sort of tragic and serene.” What might be the reason for the narrator’s emphasis on her looking like a girl?
2. How does the narrator describe Homer Barron? What could “Homer” connote? What could Barron connote?
3. What do we learn about the attitude of the community towards the relationship between Homer Barron and Miss Emily in Part 3?

**Part 4**

1. What else do we learn about the Jefferson community’s reaction towards the relationship between Homer and Emily in the first four paragraphs of Part 4? Give some examples. From whose perspective do we learn all this? To what extent would you consider this information reliable?
2. Comment on the Baptist minister’s silence after his interview with Miss Emily: “Then some of the ladies began to say that it was a disgrace to the town and a bad example to the young people. The men did not want to interfere, but at last the ladies forced the Baptist minister–Miss Emily’s people were Episcopal– to call upon her. He would never divulge what happened during that interview, but he refused to go back again.”
3. Comment on the following excerpt: “When the town got free postal delivery, Miss Emily alone refused to let them fasten the metal numbers above her door and attach a mailbox to it. She would not listen to them.” Why not?

**Part 5**

1. In what way(s) could the crayon face of Miss Emily’s father be significant? Can you find a similar reference to her father in earlier sections of the story?
2. Comment on what the following excerpt might tell us about the relationship between Miss Emily and the townspeople: “…and the very old men –some in their brushed Confederate uniforms–on the porch and the lawn, talking of Miss Emily as if she had been a contemporary of theirs, believing that they had danced with her and courted her perhaps, confusing time with its mathematical progression, as the old do, to whom all the past is not a diminishing road but, instead, a huge meadow which no winter ever quite touches, divided from them now by the narrow bottle-neck of the most recent decade of years.”
3. After Miss Emily’s death, what do we discover in the room “which no one had seen in forty years”? Why is the second pillow on the bed important? What does it show to us? Discuss Miss Emily’s motive for her action.

**More questions**

1. Comment on the title of the story: What does “rose” symbolize?
2. What does the depiction of the manservant tell us about the historical and social context in America then? How do the townspeople approach him? What is his name and what might it connote?
3. Would you consider Miss Emily a scapegoat? Discuss.
4. Who is the protagonist of the story?
5. Who is the antagonist of the story? What does the antagonist represent in the story?
6. Why does the narrator scramble the chronology of events in the story?
7. What type of woman is represented through Miss Emily Grierson?
8. Discuss the Southern Gothic
9. Find some references to social class in the story and discuss what these might indicate about the social and historical context in the story.
10. To what extent would you consider the story a critical commentary about Southern society?